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ABSTRACT

This survey was designed to: produce and compare data on the number and composition of undergraduate library science graduates for a specific year (1980) with statistics on master's level graduates; to identify the probable placement opportunities for undergraduate library science students; to define the administrative levels within colleges and universities which such programs enjoy; and to represent the attitudes of undergraduate library science educators on such topics as the role of the undergraduate program in library education and the future of the undergraduate degree. The 1980 American Library Association Standing Committee on Library Education's "Undergraduate Programs in Library Education (Four-Year Schools)" was used to define the population to be surveyed. Of the 227 surveys mailed, 166 (73.1%) were returned. Twenty-nine schools reported having no appropriate program and seven supplied unusable information, leaving a total of 130 usable responses. An overall review of the responses shows a high degree of commitment to programs which many respondents believe are dying out. Undergraduate programs seem to be producing employable graduates, particularly in the area of school/media librarianship, and there is a feeling among the administrators of these programs that their graduates can be competitive in other areas of librarianship as well. Following an introduction and information on survey methodology, the report contains sections on: degrees and programs; graduates; positions and salaries; and the attitude survey. References and the survey instrument are included. (THC)

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The Other Librarian: A Survey of Undergraduate Library Science Programs and Their Graduates

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past century, the undergraduate library science degree has been both endorsed as a professional degree, and dismissed as unsuitable preparation for professional work. The Board of Education for Librarianship Standards of 1925 [1] codified the bachelor's degree in library science (B.L.S.), making this degree the lesser, but still acceptable, counterpart of the master's degree, with either one or two years of college level education the prerequisite to earning the B.L.S. Before the implementation of the 1925 standards, undergraduate degree programs were the only programs offered for professional education and were the hallmark of both the Albany School and the Columbia Library School.[2]

But the Board of Education for Librarianship Standards of 1925 became, over the next two decades, the focus of debates by those in the profession seeking more intensive, higher level professional education than an undergraduate degree might allow. While the concept of the undergraduate degree was maintained in the 1933 standards [3], by the early 1940's arguments against the continuation of this program of professional education were increasing. Both Reece's study [4] and the conference at the University of Illinois Library School [5] (to name but two focussed discussions on the topic) heightened awareness of the need both for a basic university education as a precursor to professional study, and for an enriched program of education in librarianship. Proponents of the undergraduate programs cited the excellence of performance of these degree holders, and did gain some support for the continuation of these programs. Still, a "proposal to expand dependence on undergraduate

professional education was decisively rejected by the end of 1946, and after that the profession gave support ... to graduate professional education as the standard."[6]

Since that era, undergraduate library science programs have been relegated to a lesser role in the preparation of librarians, and have become, in many cases, programs granting minor degrees, or offering coursework for teacher training or school librarianship only. There has remained, however, an interest in the role of the undergraduate library program as part of an overall articulation of a program for library science education. A 1983 essay on accreditation by Daniel[7] notes that "librarianship needs a stronger career ladder" which recognizes that information work exists on many levels, and can be supported by an undergraduate library science education program. The trend, as Myers reports[8], is for libraries of all kinds to hire fewer M.L.S. graduates, with more emphasis on replacing professional with para-professionals to do work more clerical in nature.

Over the years, information concerning the structure and status of undergraduate library science programs has been minimal, and because of the lack of homogeneity in these programs, little attention has been paid to the occupational success of program graduates. A study by Morris in 1969 found that there was an avowed interest by college and university libraries in hiring undergraduate library science degree holders[9]; Pfister and Monroe contended in 1975[10] that the undergraduate degree could and should produce graduates capable of making many positive contributions to the library profession. Yet no survey of U. S. schools

has appeared to represent the relative success of these graduates and the programs from which they emerge. While many views on the relative merits of an undergraduate program have been given over the years, no comprehensive survey of attitudes about the quality and future of these programs from the point of view of program instructors and/or deans has been conducted.

This survey attempts to provide information in these areas; to produce and compare with statistics on master's level graduates basic data on the number and composition of graduates for a specific year (1980); to identify the probable placement opportunites for undergraduate library science students; to define the administrative levels within colleges and universities which such programs enjoy; and, to represent the attitudes of undergraduate library science educators on such topics as the role of the undergraduate program in library education and the future of the undergraduate degree.

METHODOLOGY

Because library science programs at the undergraduate level exist in a variety of academic settings to teach skills for different levels of library work, one difficulty in designing the survey was the definition of the population to be studied. The somewhat ill-defined nature of non-master's degree education led to the use of the 1980 American Library Association's Standing Committee on Library Education Undergraduate programs in library education (four-year schools) [11] to define the population to be surveyed. Schools listed in this document were reported

to award a major and/or minor in library science at the bachelor's level, granting degrees with designations such as "B.A.", "B.S.", and "B.S.E." in library science. The list included one school from Guam and one from British Columbia, but these two were dropped from the list, leaving a total of 227 schools in the continental U. S. to be surveyed. A random sample of this population was considered, but decided against. Given the lack of clear definition in program intent, a stratified population was suspected but could not be proven; a total population survey obviated this problem.

The survey instrument was prepared, pretested at a local institution offering an undergraduate library science program, and mailed to the selected 227 schools in the spring of 1983. In order to provide for any time lag which schools might experience in collecting and analyzing data for internal use, the survey requested information for 1980 program graduates only. Surveys were number coded to provide anonymity. Follow-up surveys to non-respondents were mailed in the late spring of 1983.

As indicated in Table 1, not all schools listed in the SCOLE directory actually offered undergraduate programs, with twenty-two responding that they offered no undergraduate program. Additionally, a few responses were returned with no usable data, leaving a survey population total of 130 programs. It is important to note that within the 130 questionnaires, and with the exception of the attitude survey, not all questions were answered, requiring each question to be reported upon the analyzed in isolation.

Table 1. Population: Undergraduate Library Science Programs

1. Total number of surveys sent	227
2. Total number returned, all types (Response rate = 73.1%)	166
a. Reported no program	29
b. Data not usable	7
3. Total usable responses	130

Table 2. Number and Sex of Graduates, 1980

1. Total number of graduates reported	791
2. Number male graduates reported	101 (13.2%)
3. Number female graduates reported	664 (86.8%)

DEGREES AND PROGRAMS

When queried about the programs and degrees offered the overwhelming majority of responses (82.3%) indicated the degree was a minor designated by such terms as "Library-Media Specialist", "Educational Media" and "Library and Information Science". Library science majors were awarded in forty-one programs (33.1%) while only twenty-two programs (17.7%) provided both major and minor degrees. Many respondents pointed out that the minor degrees were awarded in tandem with teaching diplomas, as part of a general curriculum in education or media. Programs offering majors in library science most frequently designated their degrees as being media-oriented, and often a subject minor was an indicated requirement.

Administratively, the programs operated under a wide variety of titles. To the query, "What is your unit's title?", about three-quarters of the respondents answered with some form of "Library and Information Services" or "Library and Educational Media". A few responded "Education Services" or "Teacher Education"; other offerings included unit titles such as "Professional Studies", "Communications", and "Learning Resources". There was no continuity in the administrative designation of "School", "Area", or "Department"; any combination of the above titles and administrative designations was used.

Of further interest was the level within the college or university to which each unit reported. The largest number of units - more than half - reported to the College, School, or Department of Education, while about twenty-four percent reported directly to an academic dean in the

central administration of the institution. Since many library science programs began as an educational enhancement to the general services provided by an institution's library, it is interesting to note that only three units were still administratively tied to the library. Of equal interest is the wide variety of interpretations made by institutions concerning the correct placement of an undergraduate library science program in the curriculum. Three institutions thought it part of Humanities, one as part of Science and Technology, three placed it with Languages and Literature, twelve with Arts and Sciences, one with psychology studies, and another with physical education. Given the widely diverse namings, no single administrative description is possible, although some form of "School of Library and Information Science of the College of Education" was clearly favored as a designation, and administrative link.

GRADUATES

Respondents were asked to report the number of 1980 graduates, to list whether the degree given was a major or minor, and to indicate the sex of the graduates. Table 2 lists the data reported, and points out the problem of data collection encountered in this survey. Simple division indicates each program might have seven or eight students in each graduating class; in fact, almost half the programs had six or less. More active programs of ten or more students accounted for only thirty percent of the respondents. As might have been easily predicted, females comprised the greater portion of the graduates, accounting for almost

87% of the total. No significant data on majors or minors were available, and are not recorded here.

To provide more depth to these figures, data were compared to those reported in the annual Library Journal study report in 1980.[12] In this comparison, as in later comparisons in this survey, LJ data were adjusted to exclude Canadian schools. With some small differences, the male-female ratio for graduates of ALA-accredited master's level programs was similar, with the LJ survey reporting 81.3% female graduates from a population of 3,868. As closely tied to the field of education as most of the undergraduate programs are, the slightly higher but comparable ratio of women is not unusual.

Another figure of interest to this study is the number of graduates who continued their education, either by pursuing a master's degree in library science, or by continuing their education in some other field. Of the 791 graduates reported, 201 (26.4%) either entered or were graduated from an M.L.S. program since 1980, while seventy (9%) pursued some other form of education. About thirty-five percent, then, continued their education after receiving their undergraduate library science degree. Again, a caveat is in order in data interpretation: those providing figures on the number of 1980 graduates could not always provide data on other questions, including questions regarding further education. These figures should be interpreted as indicators only, not as exact data.

POSITIONS AND SALARIES

The questionnaire attempted to solicit information on the types and level of positions accepted by their 1980 graduates. Respondents were asked to give data on the type of library in which graduates were employed, and to note if the position was "professional" or "paraprofessional." To clarify to some extent the distinction between these latter terms, the questionnaire defined a "professional position" as "any library position which may be held by an MLS graduate." Results of the responses, as shown in Table 3, indicate an expected bias towards positions in school/media centers. Two caveats are in order in interpreting question results: first, the term "professional" was by necessity loosely defined, and comments on the survey sheet indicate a divergence of opinion on whether positions could be considered professional or paraprofessional; second, survey remarks submitted by respondants suggest the term "other" for "type of library" was interpreted by some to mean "other type of library", and by others to mean "other type of employment." The overall percentage of professional position's obtained, while not as high as the 93.1% professional hiring reported in the Library Journal study, is higher than was anticipated. While these results should be accepted only tentatively, the high proportion of professional positions in school libraries coupled with earlier studies such as that of Morris [14] suggest fairly reliable data. Additionally, the strong bias towards employment by undergraduate degree holders in school library settings compared with the more dispersed employment pattern indicated in the LJ study correlates with administrative ties to the field of education noted above.

Table 3. Positions Accepted by 1980 Graduates

(With comparisons of graduate and undergraduate students)

Type of Library	No. Accepting Professional Positions (n= / %)	No. Accepting Para-professional Positions (n= / %)	Percentage of Placement By Type of Library, 1980, MLS Graduates[13]
PUBLIC	64 / 11.64	35 / 26.5	27.1
ACADEMIC	48 / 8.72	24 / 18.2	25.1
SCHOOL (Media Ctr.)	328 / 59.64	42 / 31.8	19.5
SPECIAL	45 / 8.18	22 / 16.7	28.3
SYSTEM	-	-	
OTHER	65 / 11.82	9 / 6.8	
TOTAL	550/100.0	132/100.0	100.0

Table 4. Salaries Accepted by 1980 Graduates

Salary Range	n=	%
less than $8,000/year	12	3.9
$8,000-$9,999/year	50	16.2
$10,000-$11,999/year	36	44.0
$12,000-$13,999/year	93	30.1
more than $14,000/year	18	5.8
Total	309	100.0

Salary range figures were also requested, as reported in Table 4. Respondents were less able to produce information on this topic, but results are consistent with average salaries in education.[15] Comparison with Library Journal data is difficult in this area, as the LJ study is more complete and specific. Not unexpectedly, undergraduate degree holders commanded a smaller salary than did master's degree graduates, who earned a median salary of $14,223, with a range in average salaries from $12,227 to $18, 431.[16] No data were collected on sex based salary differences, but given the high percentage of female graduates (see Table 2), salaries reported for undergraduate degree holders presumably represent this bias.

ATTITUDE SURVEY

The portion of the survey most consistently answered was the attitude survey, which posed a series of statements about the undergraduate library science program and asked for degrees of agreement or disagreement (Table 5). The strongest response to any of the attitude queries was received by question 1, as the table shows, with less strong opinions recorded for the other questions.

Interesting correlations appear between the responses to the statements, as a study of the results will show. While over seventy-one percent believe that their graduates have no problems obtaining positions (statement 1), over seventy-four percent report problems in recruiting students (statement 6) and forty percent believe their programs are dying out (statement 7). Like the graduate programs in library science,

Table 5. Attitudes Towards Undergraduate Library Science Programs

STATEMENTS (n=)	Strongly Agree (n= / %)	Agree (n= / %)	Don't Know (n= / %)	Disagree (n= / %)	Strongly Disagree (n= / %)
1. Graduates of my undergraduate library science program have no problems obtaining library positions (n=119)	33 / 27.7	52 / 43.7	14 / 11.8	18 / 15.1	2 / 1.7
2. There are many library positions which require the MLS for which my graduates are trained (n=112)	14 / 12.5	38 / 33.9	7 / 6.25	32 / 28.6	21 / 18.75
3. The B.L.S. (or its equivalents) should be the pre-requisite to an M.L.S. (n=119)	16 / 13.4	18 / 15.1	11 / 9.2	32 / 26.9	42 / 35.3
4. Undergraduate library science programs should be accredited by the ALA (n=123)	13 / 10.6	30 / 24.4	19 / 15.4	34 / 27.6	27 / 22.0
5. Undergraduate library science graduates should be considered professional librarians (n=121)	26 / 21.5	40 / 33.1	7 / 5.8	31 / 25.6	17 / 14.0
6. My undergraduate library science program has no problem recruiting students (n=109)	3 / 2.8	19 / 17.4	6 / 5.5	61 / 56.0	20 / 18.3
7. Undergraduate library science programs are dying out (n=120)	15 / 12.5	33 / 27.5	31 / 25.8	33 / 27.5	8 / 6.7

undergraduate programs seem to experience problems in encouraging students to join the profession.

A schism within this area and level of library education is evident in the diverse responses to statements 2 and 5. While generally believing their graduates should be considered professionals, respondents were split almost equally on the issue of how well-equipped their graduates are to handle positions which require the master's degree in library science. Respondents further felt that accreditation by the American Library Association (statement 4) was undesirable; many commented that too many accrediting bodies exist already, particularly in those programs closely aligned with the field of education. Nor did most view the undergraduate degree as a prerequisite to the M.L.S. (statement 3). Yet the fairly strong positive response to the statement "Undergraduate library science graduates should be considered professional librarians" indicates a feeling among many that these programs can and do produce graduates capable of competing professionally with master's degree holders.

CONCLUSION

An overall review of the responses shows a high degree of commitment to programs which many respondents believe are dying out. Undergraduate programs seem to be producing employable graduates, particularly in the area of school/media librarianship, and there is a feeling among the administrators of these programs that their graduates can be competitive in other areas of librarianship as well. A separatist approach to the type of articulation suggested by Daniel [17] is evident, with little

interest in the type of milti-level accreditation she seeks. Graduates themselves are primarily female, earn between ten- and fourteen-thousand per year, and generally accept what appear to be professional-level positions, usually in school library settings. About one-third continue their education, most frequently in the field of library and information science.

Additional studies in this area of library education are desirable, and would be furthered through better record-keeping and analyses within each institution. Future analyses should focus on a more exacting critique of the employment patterns of the undergraduate library science degree holder, and might address differences in employment between undergraduate and graduate degree holders. Other studies might query undergraduate degree holders about positions accepted, the value of their educational experience, and their experiences within the library profession. Replications of previous studies, such as Pfister's 1969 survey, [18] are also in order. Such studies will provide greater understanding and less competition between the undergraduate and graduate library education programs, and foster cooperation among the ranks of those who continue to provide, at many levels, the educational background of those who enter our profession.

1. American Library Association. Board of Education for Librarianship. First Annual Report of the Board of Education for Librarianship (Chicago : American Library Association, 1924) : pp. 5-28.

2. Carl M. White, A Historical Introduction to Library Education: Problems and Progress to 1951, (Metuchen, New Jersey : Scarecrow Press, 1976), pp. 63-64.

3. "Minimum Requirements for Library Schools," ALA Bulletin 27 (15 December 1933) : 610-613.

4. Ernest J. Reece, Programs for Library Schools (New York : Columbia University Press, 1943).

5. Illinois Library School Association, Fifty Years of Education for Librarianship (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 1943).

6. C. White, A Historical Introduction to Library Education, p. 239.

7. Evelyn H. Daniel, "Expanding ALA Accredutation," Library Journal 108 (February 1, 1983) : 178-179.

8. Margaret Myers, "Library Personnel: Supply and Demand," Drexel Library Quarterly 17 (Summer 1981) : 109.

9. Leslie R. Morris, "Types of Library Degrees: An Attitude Survey," Journal of Education for Librarianship 10 (Summer 1969) : 28-32.

10. Fred Pfister and Hamilton Monroe, "The Undergraduate Student: An Opportunity and An Obligation," Journal of Education for Librarianship 16 (Fall 1975) : 86-94.

11. American Library Association, Standing Committee on Library Education, Undergraduate Programs in Library Education (Four-Year Schools), (Chicago : American Library Association, 1980).

12. Carol L. Learmont and Stephen Van Houton, "Placements & Salaries 1980: Holding the Line," Library Journal 106 (October 1, 1981) : 1881-1887.

13. Ibid.

14. L. Morris, "Types of Library Degrees."

15. National Center for Education Statistics. Digest of Education Statistics 1982, by W. Vance and Leo J. Eiden, (Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1982) : 56.

16. C. Learmont and S. Van Houton, "Placements & Salaries 1980," pp. 1883-1884.

17. E. Daniel, "Expanding ALA Accreditation."

18. F. Pfister and H. Monroe, "The Undergraduate Student."

Institution #_____

PLEASE NOTE: Questions apply to graduates of any term of the 1980 academic year only.

1. Please indicate the undergraduate programs you offer; indicate if these programs are majors or minors:_____

_____

_____

2. Please indicate the number of 1980 graduates in each of the programs noted above, again specifying if graduates hold a major or minor:_____

_____

_____

3. Sex of graduates, 1980: M_____ F_____

4a. Types of library or library-related positions accepted by your graduates (please give number)

TYPE OF LIBRARY	No. Accepting Professional* Positions	No. Accepting Paraprofessional Positions	Don't Know
PUBLIC			
SCHOOL (media center)			
ACADEMIC			
SPECIAL			
SYSTEM			
OTHER (specify)			

4b. Total number of graduates accepting non-library related positions after graduation:_____

5. Salaries accepted for all library and library-related positions, 1980 graduates: (give numbers)

_____below $8,000/yr. _____$8,000-$9,999/yr.

_____$10,000-$11,999/yr. _____$12,000-$13,999/yr.

_____$14,000-above/yr.

*"Professional positions" refers to any library position which may be held by an MLS graduate.

6. Number of your 1980 graduates who have entered/graduated from MLS programs since 1980:_____

7. Number of your 1980 graduates who have sought another degree (non-MLS) since 1980:_____

8. What is your unit's title (e.g., School of Library Science, Department of Media Technology, etc.)?_____

_____

9. What is the next larger unit of which your unit is a part?

_____

_____

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
1. Graduates of my undergraduate library science program have no problems obtaining library positions.	____	____	____	____	____
2. There are many library positions which require the MLS for which my graduates are trained.	____	____	____	____	____
3. The B.L.S. (or its equivalents) should be the pre-requisite to an M.L.S.	____	____	____	____	____
4. Undergraduate library science programs should be accredited by the ALA.	____	____	____	____	____
5. Undergraduate library science graduates should be considered professional librarians.	____	____	____	____	____
6. My undergraduate library science program has no problem recruiting students.	____	____	____	____	____
7. Undergraduate library science programs are dying out.	____	____	____	____	____